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Chairman: Mr. Matute (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Peru)

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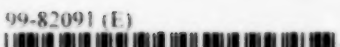

In the absence of Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Matute (Peru), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Environment and sustainable development *(continued)* (A/54/468)

1. **Mr. Flanders** (Assistant Director, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international institutional arrangements related to environment and development (A/54/468), said that it had been prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in consultation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the basis of input provided by the secretariats of the various United Nations conventions and with contributions from the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations University.

2. The report highlighted work in a variety of organizations, including UNEP, the World Bank, the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the World Resources Institute and the convention secretariats to understand better the key scientific and policy linkages among the major environmental conventions.

3. Some of the issues considered included integration of national reporting requirements; the design of training and capacity-building programmes that covered issues related to more than one convention; cooperation among the convention bodies in producing integrated scientific assessments that examined the linkages among ecological processes; cooperation in producing materials to inform the public of the relationships among environmental issues; exploring the potential for integrating the meetings of the convention bodies in terms of time and place; and the work on joint letters of understanding and agreements among the convention secretariats on common issues.

4. After drawing attention to paragraph 38 of the report, which referred to the establishment of the Division of Environmental Conventions, he said that the key conclusion of the report was that coordination between multilateral environmental agreements and regional agreements needed to be strengthened at several levels, including cooperation between secretariats, national implementation and regional and local performance monitoring. The cooperation already taking place between various agencies and the convention parties and secretariats was contributing to increased scientific understanding of the linkages between issues and between conventions. Consideration could now be given to developing coherent and well planned interventions at national levels to identify specific issues upon which convention secretariats could work jointly. The General Assembly had an important policy role to play in furthering implementation at the national level and encouraging the work that was being done in various intergovernmental bodies to improve cooperation between the convention processes.

5. **Ms. Päivöke** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and in addition, Iceland, said that synergies, complementarities and cooperation could be identified between the respective governing bodies of the conventions, in spite of the fact that conventions were at different stages of implementation. The streamlining of national reporting, interlinkages of scientific and technical assessments, and a general exchange of information might represent some of the potential areas of cooperation.

6. The European Union acknowledged that there were already linkages and cooperation between UNEP and the environmental conventions, and wished to emphasize the need further to strengthen those linkages. It welcomed decision 20/18 of the Governing Council of UNEP because the decision underscored the need to intensify UNEP's catalytic role to stimulate and support collaboration among multilateral environmental conventions and international processes. There was clearly a need to address those international arrangements holistically under the global policy guidance of the General Assembly and with due regard to the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development, with full respect for the independent international legal status the various conventions enjoyed. That need should be kept in mind when deciding on the mandate of the environmental management group referred to in General Assembly resolution 53/242. The European Union supported the rapid setting up of that Group, which was a key element of the reform agreed in the resolution.

7. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation) said that the report was very informative and particularly useful in setting out the efforts undertaken by the convention secretariats themselves to achieve better synergies. The process of achieving a more comprehensive, coherent and holistic approach to the implementation of the major environmental and environment-related multilateral international instruments should be aimed at promoting the complementarity of efforts under the different conventions and assisting States and the international community as a whole better to fulfil their commitments under the conventions. The General Assembly had a key role to play

in that process; in considering the issues it should take into account the autonomous character of the various conferences of the parties. His delegation believed that it was necessary to continue and build upon the work that had already been done, and it would soon be submitting a draft resolution with its suggestions in that regard.

The meeting rose 3.40 p.m.